

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EURE-00 OMB-01 IO-10 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /080 W

----- 003024

P 071318Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7856

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT. UK

SUBJECT: CONSERVATIVE LEADER THATCHER DEPARTS FOR
EGYPT AND SYRIA

REF: LONDON 18715

1. MARGARET THATCHER, LEADER OF CONSERVATIVE PARTY, DEPARTED LONDON JANUARY 7 FOR BRIEF VISITS IN CAIRO AND DAMASCUS. ACCOMPANIED BY HER NEW STAFF AIDE (MP ADAM BUTLER) AND A PRESS OFFICER (GORDON REECE), MRS. THATCHER WILL ARRIVE CAIRO MID-AFTERNOON WITH FIRST FUNCTION SCHEDULED AS PRIVATE DINNER WITH SADAT AND HIS WIFE. JANUARY 8 MRS. THATCHER WILL HAVE APPOINTMENTS WITH SADAT AND EGYPTIAN PRIME MINISTER. WITH POSSIBLE OTHER CONVERSATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS TO BE ESTABLISHED AFTER ARRIVAL.

2. THATCHER PARTY ARRIVES IN DAMASCUS JANUARY 9 PROBABLY IN LATE AFTERNOON OR EARLY EVENING WITH APPOINTMENTS SCHEDULED WITH ASAD AND PRIME MINISTER.

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3. NO FORMAL PRESS STATEMENT HAS BEEN ISSUED. ACCORDING

TO AN AIDE, "ECAUSE OF SECURITY." AIDE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT TRAVEL TO EGYPT AND SVRIA HAD BEEN ADVANCED IN ORDER TO OERMIT MRS. THATCHER'S PARTICIPATION IR PARLIAMENTARY DEEBATES NEXT UEEK BEGINNING JANUARY 12 ON NORTHERN IRELAND AND DEVOLUTION.

4. SHADOW FOREIGN SECRETARY MAUDLIRG PARTICIPATED IN FCO BRIEFING PROVIDED MRS. THATCHER. MAUDLING CONTINUES TO FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN SPECULATION ABOUT RESHUFFLE IN SHADOW CABINET MEMBERSHIP. BUT HIS ABSERCE FROM OARTY ENTOURAGE DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN HE WILL BE DROPPED. (NRS. THATCHEP ARNCUNCED AFTER HER ELECTIOR AS LEADER HER OWN FEELINGS OF IRADEQUACIES IR FOREIGR AFFAIRS AREA WHICH SHE HOPED TO REMEDY BY VISITS ABRCAD. MIDDLE EAST VISIT, WH.ICH WILL BE BALANCED CFF BY VISIT TO ISRAEL PROBABLY IR MARCH, IS A FURTHER INDICATION OF HER INTENTION TO ESTABLISH CREDENTIALS OVERSEAS AND IN CONNECTION WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS.)

RICHARDSON

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